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ADVICE TO YOUNG ARTISTS.

IF you have the curse of genius, young man, which you cannot subdue or degrade, God help you! There is no other help for you, and I have no advice to give in such a case, save to retire from among men, like a leper, for you are not of them and have no place with them. To be sure, your name may, a few centuries hence, become the pride and glory of your country; if there is any satisfaction in that uncertainty, glean such comfort as you may from it, but you have no claim upon your cotemporaries. What you may be to posterity is nought to them. You are but an object of distrust, envy or hatred, for you should know that all men, by virtue of some paltry idiosyncrasy which they magnify (because it is theirs) into a gift, cherish in their secret hearts a conceit that they are not as other men, grow bitter because of the non-recognition of their superiority, and will not brook the elevation of any but the commonplace, like themselves; and so, being in a vast majority, unite their efforts in a crusade against the really gifted, to render the possession a curse and discomfort. This is a general—possibly an exaggerated view, and doubtless there may be exceptions to the rule, but rule it is, in general, nevertheless. But, as I have said, I have no counsels for you who are burthened with genius. You are but one sent before to prepare pleasures for the enjoyment of those to come after you, and must accept the discounted glory as your only possible reward. But to you who are only moderately gifted, or better still, who have but an inclination towards art, and have mistaken a desire for a talent, I have something to say. You would make whatever ability you have subservient to your social advance and material prosperity, and would sacrifice all else to that end? Then learn the course you are to pursue. It is written you cannot serve God and mammon, and it is true that anything more than a seeming regard for virtue, justice, etc. is incompatible with the greatest worldly success that you covet. A true, earnest, independent, manly pursuit of art, for the love of it, is in the nature of serving God, and has no place in your creed. You are to seek the favor of your fellow mortals, and of them expect your reward. Make little effort to win the approval of the true and noble of earth, for they are few and without influence; also, they may divine your real character, and so you needlessly augment their contempt for you. You are to systematically suppress all emotions men call generous, only simulate them when occasion requires. You shall flatter the coarse vanity of the rich, defer to the absurd opinions of the powerful, cringe to those in authority and never give unnecessary offence to any, for there are none devoid of influence which sooner or later may be felt. If there be a question between two authorities and you are forced to decide to which you will pay homage, weigh well the relative strength of position of such now, and the chances of permanency in the future, and take your position accordingly. Let no other considerations influence you, and let your decision be made with all the ambiguity of language possible, to avoid unnecessary offence.

Should one who has befriended you fall into ridicule,

laugh with his enemies, for thereby you gain in numbers, but keep up the appearance of friendship with him, that you may not lose even the one. Should he, however, discover your double dealing, you are still the gainer. Decry the art and artists of your country, especially those artists who have earned and occupy high positions, for so you will appear learned and fearless. Your daring will quite awe your hearers, and impose upon their ignorance with the boldness of your denunciations. Always accompany this, however, with a corresponding servility to those who hear you, this will not fail to act as an antidote to the shock, for thus you virtually acknowledge their superiority to those attacked, and their vanity can always be relied upon to swallow this, and more, if administered with any degree of discretion; and so you still add to the number of your friends. Of course these schemes will occupy much time supposed to be precious to an artist, and so it is, but the work is being done for you, as bees make honey for our table while we attend to other wants. There are always delving men of talent who will furnish material ready for your use if you skilfully dilute it with enough of your own to enable you to claim it all as yours and so disgust the originator that he will not dispute your claim lest the whole be laid at his door. The multitude are neither scrupulous or observing in such matters.

Should your ambition desire a reputation for originality, you have only to be vigilant, watch those who are capable of producing new thoughts and who, in their unsuspecting simplicity, carelessly put them out. Seize upon them promptly! Boldly set up a claim before the author's is established, and so, having already secured all the influence on your side, your victory is easy and complete. Should your gifted victim be moved to a violent attack, you allude to him as a poor, misguided lunatic, crazed by excessive envy, towards whom you have no unkindly feeling, and you are more than triumphant. You have not only secured all the honor due to him but have transferred to his shoulders the contempt that rightly belongs to yourself.

These rules will apply to all arts—painting, literature, sculpture, music and all—with certain success if properly used. Of course their practice will win you the contempt of all true men and women, but what need you care, if you be saved from a life of obscurity and gain the applause of the multitude? A thousand voices to one! You go through this life with the seeming respect of the world, die without visible dishonor, your funeral is largely attended, where the clergyman recounts your virtues, commends your life to men and consigns your spirit to the God who gave it. To be sure you may have some difficulty in explaining that “blameless life” to the satisfaction of your Judge, but then you will have a whole eternity to do it in—and will probably need it!

WORMWOOD.

OTHER ADVICE TO YOUNG ARTISTS.

MY neighbor Wormwood, being a good deal agitated by the storm and winds of late, employed his bitterest breath to shed abroad his pessimistic views as to the

study and practice of art. What he said cannot be called untrue—on the contrary there was much in his article fearfully just! Still it is so incomplete, or onesided, that it amounts to pretty much the same thing, and is calculated to mislead the unthinking and discourage the thoughtful and earnest. I therefore feel constrained to present my own views, to counteract, as far as may be, the pernicious effect of his gloomy sarcasm. In the first place, then, there is no occasion for his addressing himself to the class he does, for those persons have no right to an artistic existence at all. Though there are such parasites upon the noble calling I know, they are entitled to no consideration, and need none of my neighbor's guidance. They are already too proficient in the art of simulating art. Those who most need counsel and encouragement from some source with worldly wisdom to impart, he dismisses as so far outside of the world's sympathy as to be utterly without hope of success in it, and presents to their sensitive natures such a gloomy aspect of affairs as would be calculated to discourage from all effort. The object of my writing, as I have before said, is to try and reassure these that their powers may not be wasted, and arouse them to worthy effort for the good of their race, present or future. While it is certainly true that gifted men and women are sometimes—perhaps *frequently*—unappreciated and left to struggle on through a life of hardship and neglect, while they, all the time, labor to enrich the world with results that will only be esteemed and held precious when their sufferings are long since ended, and the great brain, heart and hand are cold in death. It is also true that often this class *are* appreciated, at least in part, and *do* reap a portion of their reward this side the grave. Of course they are required to endure their share of annoyances of an imperfect world, like their plodding fellows. Through being sensitive, fastidious, capacious and unlearned in the world's ways, these ordinary troubles of life they are apt to magnify into sorrows or wrongs, sometimes even greater than their morbid natures feel able to bear, and rashly take themselves off, to escape that which the average man would scarcely give a passing thought. It is also true that the unusually gifted do have, as Wormwood says, annoyances peculiar to themselves. The best results of their labor is often filched by unscrupulous persons, who not only steal the thought, and even the manner of expressing it, but credit as well, giving slander and abuse in place of it. But this is only one of the conditions of life, and like many of this world's ills, can often be provided against by a reasonable outlay of caution, forethought and determination on their own part. There is also, as my neighbor says, undoubtedly a degree of that latent conceit and consequent jealousy of success, especially that unexpected success of unthought-of individuals, in the hearts of most, if not all men. At the same time, there is also in their hearts a sort of pride and generous recognition of the efforts of genius. Not being of extraordinary talents himself the common man is dull and slow to comprehend the value of his more gifted fellow's work, and during the process he frequently mistakes the false for the true, but he is sure to arrive at a just conclusion at last, and when a

true work is understood, he is only too glad to acknowledge it as such and enthusiastically join in the universal applause from which, even the envious, dare not withhold their voice.

You are, of course, to study all art, to strengthen your faculties and perfect your judgment, and to learn the laws governing all art productions, for these are essential to the best expression of the particular art you may pursue, without a knowledge of which, though your work may be full of the evidence of genius it will still be crude and lacking in the fullest expression. Do not fall into that fatal error so prevalent at the present moment, that obedience to long established rules is unworthy a modern student. On the contrary an affectation of independence of those essential laws, is itself born of ignorance, and an attempt of incapacity to shield itself. There is no short cut! and true genius will not seek it, genius is exacting and will not be content with any half-way expression, but will be at any pains to compass the utmost power, which is still too slight for its aspirations, therefore entertain no fear lest the study of art already accomplished may mar the originality of your work. The highway is for all to travel, each one takes his own gait upon it, or imitates others. Even if your aim is to present manner alone, you had better present good conventionality than worthless novelty.

You are to study nature to learn her ways and find out her subtle beauties, which it is your business to interpret to your work-a-day fellows, for by her forms and through her varied effects alone can you convey any impression to the understanding of another soul; hers is the court language of all art! You are also to acquaint yourself with history, that you may not lack in its truth when occasion requires the introduction of any portion of it in your work. For similar reasons, at least, a general knowledge of science is essential. In short, no knowledge will come amiss to the true artist, though some, of course, must in the nature of things, be superficial; but look to it that your art education be thorough and well grounded, beware of the misleading influence of vanity, conceit and that most seductive siren of all, the blind flattery of friends, go through a most searching examination of your own powers, compare them carefully with those who have stood the test of time. This will be most humiliating, but if you have the true spark you will not flinch nor find frivolous excuse, you will rather underrate your own crude gifts, for true genius is modest and will tolerate no sham, but in justice to yourself you must remember that the diamond in the rough does not show its real qualities, only the experienced and close observing eye can detect its obscured light. The lapidary's skill is required to bring out its latent fires, and the lapidary, in this case is yourself, and the method, patient, well directed study, therefore make no ostentatious display of your undeveloped gifts, be content to cut your gem patiently, face by face, until its every ray is freed and its utmost sparkle shall penetrate the dullest vision, make no demand for recognition until you have *established* your claim, when it will be freely accorded. Be content with the lustre of your own jewel, nor disparage that of your peers, be modest, just and generous, as you surely will if you wear a true stone.

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